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## The Decorator and Furnisher

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### EDITORIAL ANNOTATIONS.

EDITORIAL NOTICE, AND A FEW REMARKS ABOUT THE HOME.

WITH this number begins VOLUME THIRTY of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER; this also commences the Fifteenth Year of the magazine's existence. After a varied and checkered career of thirteen years, the management decided one year ago to change, not only the size and shape, but the policy of the publication, as well, expurging all signs of the trade element from its pages, and making it a DECORATIVE ART MAGAZINE, pure and simple. With what success this venture has been met, may be judged by the circular containing press notices from the leading publications of the day, enclosed in this number, and by the innumerable letters constantly coming in to us, as well. We commence our second year, and third volume under this policy therefore, with the assurance that the experiment has not been a failure; with the confidence that the field for such a journal is practically unlimited, and the knowledge that we are giving to our readers material fresh, original and up to the times.

WE WISH to call the readers' attention to the enclosed circular setting forth the liberal PREMIUM OFFER OF THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER FOR 1897, wherein an opportunity is offered lovers of books to add to their library with no expense, and but little effort. It was our intention, according to the promise made last month, to say a few words here on the value of color in home decoration, but the subject seems much too important to condense within the limits of an editorial. We will therefore give it careful consideration

in an article in the body of the May issue of this magazine, starting from first principles, and illustrating the best established theories with an entirely new and original color chart. This chart is in itself valuable to anyone interested in color principles and combinations, and is not only correct, but so simple that a child can understand it.

**WE** NOTE with pleasure, a tendency towards a more dignified classical taste in our better class of home decoration and furnishing. The fascinating French styles, especially of the Louis epochs, are gradually losing their hold upon popular taste, and the tendency seems to be towards the more "homey" English methods. While French decorative art is unquestionably beautiful and fascinating, it was not noted for comfortable home qualities, in any degree. Conceived under epochs of pomp and splendor, the designers of the day naturally catered to the taste of their wealthy clientele; and as ambitious display was the one essential element sought after, it is not surprising that the decorations and furnishings of those periods developed an atmosphere of dainty frivolity.

**THE** Louis Quinze style, that only a short time ago held such sway among us, is a fair example of this. It is a style without a foundation. Its effects are purely the work of a fanciful imagination, with or without judgment, and therefore, of all styles, it requires a reserve treatment. It is perhaps the most fascinating of all the French styles, and as such it took the fancy of a large majority of the populace, while it was a novelty; but when once its charm began to pall, its decline was rapid, and those who indulged in it freely were glad to get quit of it at any sacrifice. If there ever was a style that needed calm and considerate treatment it was this same much-overdone and much-abused Louis Quinze.

**IN** CONTRAST with these French styles, glance with the mind's eye at the homes of England, not only of the present day, but in past ages as well. Solid home comfort was the first consideration even among the higher classes; and from the simple home of the salaried clerk, to the mansion of the noble this one element predominates. We do not contend that all should be severely simple, but we do claim that in the living rooms of the home, be they of simple or high degree, comfort should be the first quality for consideration, otherwise the house is not, strictly speaking, a home. One cannot lounge comfortably in post-prandial hours of leisure, upon delicate silks and satins; dainty framed chairs and sofas in white and gold, amid a bewildering glitter of surroundings, designed for display—not use.

**NOR** do we claim that these charming French epochs, have not their proper place and use. The wealth and social standing of many of our citizens, require that some portion of their time, as well as their home should be given up to the reception of guests upon a purely social basis. Therefore our drawing-rooms, parlors—although we understand that this term is now

obsolete—and reception-rooms, are fair field for the display of these dainty, rich styles, but even then the brilliancy should be restrained and refined to suit our American requirements and conditions.

**COLOR** should be our next consideration. Not in its supreme brilliancy, neither should it be too much subdued and restrained. Of course conditions must govern its use, but as a rule a cheerful middle course is desirable in our homes. How often we ignore the close relation that exists between mind and matter in our every-day surroundings; be we in good health or no, we feel better and happier when the sun shines brightly, and generally depressed under the influence of leaden skies and dull weather.

**WHY** then, not profit by such simple every-day experience and decorate our homes with cheerful furniture, and bright colors rather than labor under the belief that dull furnishing and dismal decorations are an indication of æsthetic taste. Who can say under such influences—

"As o'er the dusky furniture I bend  
Each chair awakes the feeling of a friend!"

**IN** TOO many American homes, comfort is sacrificed to neatness, and while undoubtedly cleanliness is akin to godliness, and this should be a primary consideration, we should not stop there. There is a method of furnishing a room to give it the desirable air of comfort without disorder, or any sacrifices of refinement. The time has passed, when we used to see chairs all of one uniform pattern, ranged with mathematical precision round the walls, the carvings hidden by crochet antimacassars, and the table set within a fraction of an inch in the centre of the room. That a reaction should set in, is not surprising and the tendency has been towards the overdoing. It must be borne in mind, on the other hand, that the home is not a bazar, to be overcrowded with bric-à-brac and small meaningless nothings, the care of which is much more trying than the adjusting of the centre table to its correct degree of latitude and longitude, as in the old *regime*.

**HOWEVER**, this fad too, has had its day, and although home taste has greatly improved since the methodical period, many of our homes still lack the sense of homeliness, either from their excessive primness on the one hand, or their over-elaborate display for display's sake, on the other.

**AIM** therefore at a happy cheerful medium course in home furnishings and decorations; develop a sense of comfort in all surroundings however simple or ornate. Under these conditions the home will be a never-ending source of enjoyment and happiness to those beneath its roof, and will invoke the pleasures of memory in future years.

